

Succession Planning

»» For D&I staff, HR staff, recruiters, talent-acquisition departments, legal staff, diversity-council members, employee-resource-group leaders

III Goal Setting

As has often been stated, what gets measured gets done. In the case of increasing diversity in succession planning, without goals there will be no progress. Most companies that are determined to increase the diversity of the pipeline of the top use either their executive diversity council or a leadership group to set representational goals. Those goals can be a percentage (e.g., 30 percent more Latinos in the top three levels) or numerical additions (get Black and Asian representation in the top two levels), but they are not quotas. They require diverse slates, looking hard at what credentials are required for these positions and strong efforts to on-board, especially when executives from outside are brought in.

Some companies have devised creative solutions for opening up spots at the top levels. For example, a company that had no women at the top level (CEO and direct reports) saw no potential openings in the near future as all the top leaders were effective and not planning to retire or leave at any time soon. So it expanded the CEO's direct reports by elevating two positions, one of which was held by a woman.

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Guided Questions for Staff

»» **How well do you understand the available workforce for the underrepresented groups?**

If your company, for example, is a technical one and you lack women at the top, are you cognizant of how many women with the backgrounds you need are graduating from school and staying in the workforce and how you can improve this equation?

»» **Have you benchmarked the racial/ethnic and gender diversity of your top three levels against other organizations with similar workforces?**

Your goals need to be in context, so it's important to understand how your peers are doing.

»» **Do you assess your progress from one level to the other and over time?**

Don't look at your numbers as a snapshot of this moment but as historical rates of progress. Assess which levels have had the most attrition and why.

NEXT MONTH

Supplier Diversity for all employees and Global Diversity for D&I staff, HR staff, communications staff, employee-resource-group leaders and diversity-council members.